

The War for Independence

MAIN IDEA

Key American victories reversed British advances during the American Revolutionary War.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The American Revolution is today a national, even international, symbol of the fight for freedom.

Terms & Names

- Loyalists
- Patriots
- Saratoga
- Valley Forge
- inflation
- Marquis de Lafayette
- Charles Cornwallis
- Yorktown
- Treaty of Paris
- egalitarianism

One American's Story

Benjamin Franklin, the famous American writer, scientist, statesman, and diplomat, represented the colonies in London throughout the growing feud with Britain. As resistance in the colonies turned to bloodshed, however, Franklin fled London in 1775 and sailed home to Philadelphia.

Ironically, the issue of loyalty versus independence that was dividing the American colonies from their mother country was also dividing Franklin's own family. Franklin's son William, the royal governor of New Jersey, was stubbornly loyal to King George and opposed the rebellious atmosphere in the colonies. In one of his many letters to British authorities regarding the conflict in the colonies, William stated his position and that of others who resisted revolutionary views.

A PERSONAL VOICE WILLIAM FRANKLIN

"There is indeed a dread in the minds of many here that some of the leaders of the people are aiming to establish a republic. Rather than submit . . . we have thousands who will risk the loss of their lives in defense of the old Constitution. [They] are ready to declare themselves whenever they see a chance of its being of any avail."

—quoted in *A Little Revenge: Benjamin Franklin and His Son*



William Franklin

Because of William's stand on colonial issues, communication between him and his father virtually ceased. The break between Benjamin Franklin and his son mirrored the chasm that now divided the colonies from Britain. The notion of fighting Britain frightened and horrified some colonists even as it inspired others. Both sides believed that they were fighting for their country and being loyal to what was best for America.



VIDEO

PATRIOT FATHER, LOYALIST SON
The Divided House of Benjamin and William Franklin



The War Begins

As they took on the mighty British Empire, the colonists suffered initial losses in the Middle States, which served as the Revolutionary War's early battleground. In time, however, the colonists would battle their way back.

LOYALISTS AND PATRIOTS As the war began, Americans found themselves on different sides of the conflict. **Loyalists**—those who opposed independence and remained loyal to the British king—included judges and governors, as well as people of more modest means. Many Loyalists thought that the British were going to win and wanted to avoid punishment as rebels. Still others thought that the Crown would protect their rights more effectively than the new colonial governments would.

Patriots—the supporters of independence—drew their numbers from people who saw political and economic opportunity in an independent America. Many Americans remained neutral. **A**

The conflict presented dilemmas for other groups as well. Many African Americans fought on the side of the Patriots, but others joined the Loyalists because the British promised freedom to slaves who would fight for the Crown. Most Native Americans supported the British because they viewed colonial settlers as a greater threat to their lands.

EARLY VICTORIES AND DEFEATS As part of a plan to stop the rebellion by isolating New England, the British quickly attempted to seize New York City. The British sailed into New York harbor in the summer of 1776 with a force of about 32,000 soldiers. They included thousands of German mercenaries, or hired soldiers, known as Hessians because many of them came from the German region of Hesse.

MAIN IDEA

Forming Generalizations

A How did the thinking of Loyalists differ from that of Patriots?

Revolutionary War, 1775–1778



Military Strengths and Weaknesses

UNITED STATES

Strengths

- familiarity of home ground
- leadership of George Washington and other officers
- inspiring cause— independence

Weaknesses

- most soldiers untrained and undisciplined
- shortage of food and ammunition
- inferior navy
- no central government to enforce wartime policies



GREAT BRITAIN

Strengths

- strong, well-trained army and navy
- strong central government with available funds
- support of colonial Loyalists and Native Americans

Weaknesses

- large distance separating Britain from battlefields
- troops unfamiliar with terrain
- weak military leaders
- sympathy of certain British politicians for the American cause



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER

- Location** From which city did General Burgoyne march his troops to Saratoga?
- Place** What characteristic did many of the battle sites have in common? Why do you think this was so?



KEY PLAYER



GEORGE WASHINGTON
1732–1799

During the Revolutionary War, Commander in Chief George Washington became a national hero. An imposing man, Washington stood six feet two inches tall. He was broad-shouldered, calm, and dignified, and he was an expert horseman. But it was Washington's character that won hearts and, ultimately, the war.

Washington persistently roused dispirited men into a fighting force. At Princeton, he galloped on his white horse into the line of fire, shouting and encouraging his men. At Valley Forge, he bore the same cold and privation as every suffering soldier. Time and again, Washington's tactics saved his smaller, weaker force to fight another day. By the end of the war, the entire nation idolized General Washington, and adoring soldiers crowded near him just to touch his boots when he rode by.

Although the Continental Army attempted to defend New York in late August, the untrained and poorly equipped colonial troops soon retreated. By late fall, the British had pushed Washington's army across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania.

Desperate for an early victory, Washington risked everything on one bold stroke set for Christmas night, 1776. In the face of a fierce storm, he led 2,400 men in small rowboats across the ice-choked Delaware River. They then marched to their objective—Trenton, New Jersey—and defeated a garrison of Hessians in a surprise attack. The British soon regrouped, however, and in September of 1777, they captured the American capital at Philadelphia.

SARATOGA AND VALLEY FORGE In the meantime, one British general was marching straight into the jaws of disaster. In a complex scheme, General John Burgoyne planned to lead an army down a route of lakes from Canada to Albany, where he would meet British troops as they arrived from New York City. The two regiments would then join forces to isolate New England from the rest of the colonies.

As Burgoyne traveled through forested wilderness, militiamen and soldiers from the Continental Army gathered from all over New York and New England. While he was fighting off the colonial troops, Burgoyne didn't realize that his fellow British officers were preoccupied with holding Philadelphia and weren't coming to meet him. American troops finally surrounded Burgoyne at **Saratoga**, where he surrendered on October 17, 1777.

The surrender at Saratoga turned out to be one of the most important events of the war. Although the French had secretly aided the Patriots since early 1776, the Saratoga victory bolstered France's belief that the Americans could win the war. As a result, the French signed an alliance with the Americans in February 1778 and openly joined them in their fight. **B**

While this hopeful turn of events took place in Paris, Washington and his Continental Army—desperately low on food and supplies—fought to stay alive at winter camp in **Valley Forge**, Pennsylvania. More than 2,000 soldiers died, yet the survivors didn't desert. Their endurance and suffering filled Washington's letters to the Congress and his friends.

A PERSONAL VOICE GEORGE WASHINGTON

"It may be said that no history . . . can furnish an instance of an Army's suffering uncommon hardships as ours have done. . . . To see the men without clothes to cover their nakedness, without blankets to lie upon, without shoes, . . . and submitting without a murmur, is a proof of patience and obedience which in my opinion can scarcely be paralleled."

—quoted in *Ordeal at Valley Forge*

Life During the Revolution

One huge problem that the Continental Congress faced was paying the troops. When the Congress ran out of hard currency—silver and gold—it printed paper money called Continentals (like the Revolutionary soldiers). As Congress printed more and more money, its value plunged, causing rising prices, or **inflation**. The Congress also struggled against great odds to equip the beleaguered army.

MAIN IDEA

Developing Historical Perspective

B Why were these early victories so important to the Continental Army?

Background

See *inflation* on page R42 in the Economics Handbook.



◀ **Molly Pitcher was the heroine of the Battle of Monmouth in New Jersey, which was fought in 1778. Afterward, General Washington appointed her as a noncommissioned officer to honor her brave deeds.**

In 1781, the Congress appointed a rich Philadelphia merchant named Robert Morris as superintendent of finance. His associate was Haym Salomon, a Jewish political refugee from Poland. Morris and Salomon begged and borrowed on their personal credit to raise money to provide salaries for the Continental Army. They raised funds from Philadelphia's Quakers and Jews. On September 8, 1781, a Continental major wrote in his diary, "This day will be famous in the Annals of History for being the first on which the Troops of the United States received one Month's Pay in Specie [coin]."

The demands of war also affected civilians. When men marched off to fight, many wives stepped into their husbands' shoes, managing farms and businesses as well as households and families. Hundreds of women also followed their husbands to the battlefield, where they washed and cooked for the troops—while some, including Molly Pitcher, even risked their lives in combat. ©

The war opened some doors for African Americans. Thousands of slaves escaped to freedom in the chaos of war. About 5,000 African Americans served in the Continental Army, where their courage, loyalty, and talent impressed white Americans. Native Americans, however, remained on the fringes of the Revolution, preferring to remain independent and true to their own cultures.

MAIN IDEA

Summarizing

© What important contributions did women make in the Revolutionary War?

Winning the War

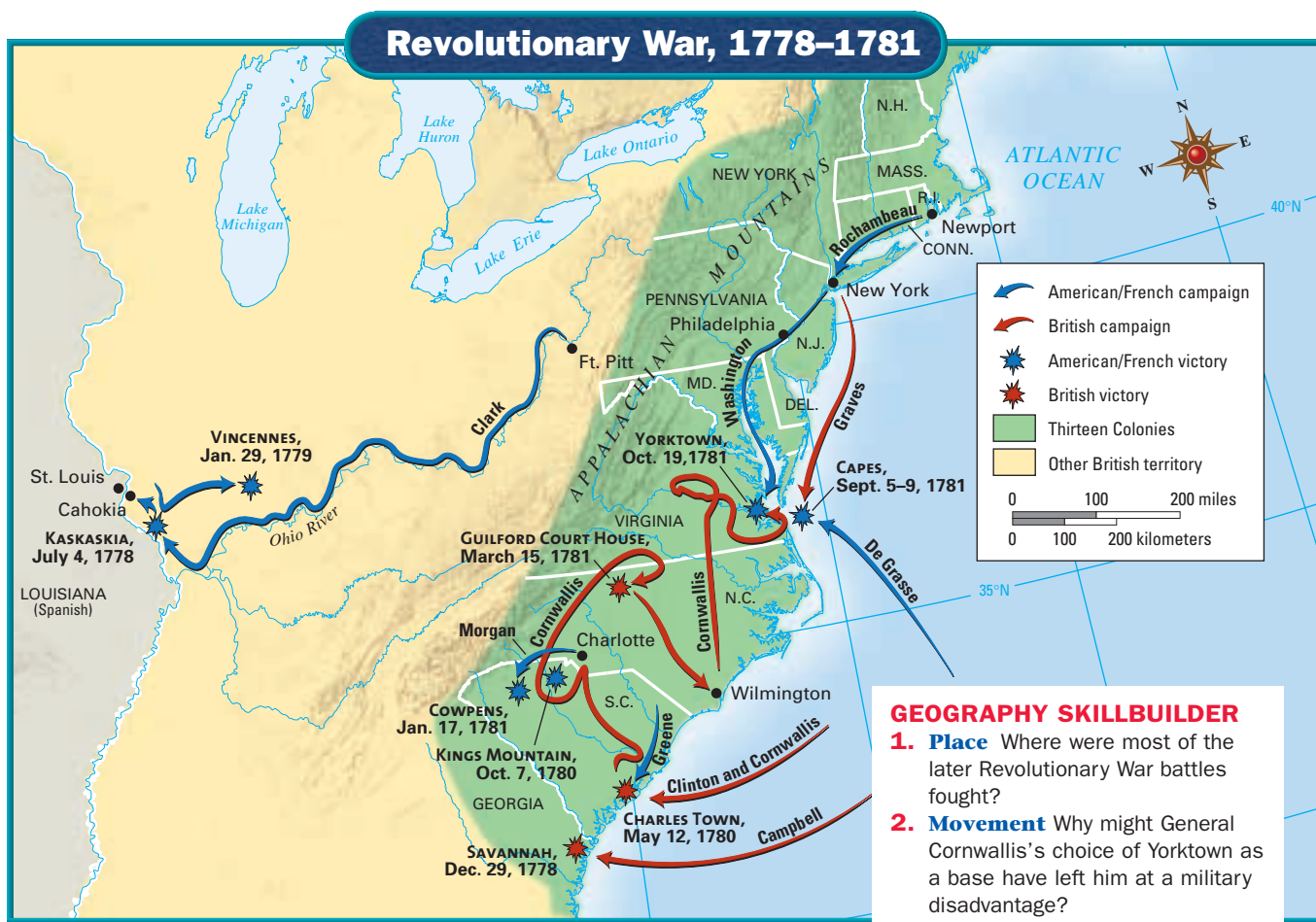
In February 1778, in the midst of the frozen winter at Valley Forge, American troops began an amazing transformation. Friedrich von Steuben, a Prussian captain and talented drillmaster, helped to train the Continental Army. Other foreign military leaders, such as the **Marquis de Lafayette** (mār-kē' də lăf'ē-ēt'), also arrived to offer their help. Lafayette lobbied France for French reinforcements in 1779, and led a command in Virginia in the last years of the war. With the help of such European military leaders, the raw Continental Army became an effective fighting force.

HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT

JOHN PAUL JONES

As the Revolutionary War raged on land, Britain and the colonies also engaged each other at sea. The newly formed Continental navy was no match for the mighty British fleet. It was only after France and Spain joined the colonists' cause that Britain lost its maritime supremacy.

Nonetheless, the colonists scored several morale-boosting victories over the British navy, due in large part to the heroics of American naval commander John Paul Jones. The Scottish-born Jones captured a number of British vessels, including the *Serapis* in 1779. It was during his epic battle against this ship that Jones rejected the British demand that he surrender by uttering the famous line, "I have not yet begun to fight."



THE BRITISH MOVE SOUTH After their devastating defeat at Saratoga, the British began to shift their operations to the South. At the end of 1778, a British expedition easily took Savannah, Georgia. In their greatest victory of the war, the British under Generals Henry Clinton and **Charles Cornwallis** captured Charles Town, South Carolina, in May 1780. Clinton then left for New York, while Cornwallis continued to conquer land throughout the South.

In early 1781, despite several defeats, the colonists continued to battle Cornwallis—hindering his efforts to take the Carolinas. The British general then chose to move the fight to Virginia. He led his army of 7,500 onto the peninsula between the James and York rivers and camped at **Yorktown**. Cornwallis planned to fortify Yorktown, take Virginia, and then move north to join Clinton's forces.

THE BRITISH SURRENDER AT YORKTOWN Shortly after learning of Cornwallis's actions, the armies of Lafayette and Washington moved south toward Yorktown. Meanwhile, a French naval force defeated a British fleet and then blocked the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay, thereby obstructing British sea routes to the bay. By late September, about 17,000 French and American troops surrounded the British on the Yorktown peninsula and began bombarding them day and night. Less than a month later, on October 19, 1781, Cornwallis finally surrendered. The Americans had shocked the world and defeated the British.

Peace talks began in Paris in 1782. The American negotiating team included John Adams, John Jay of New York, and Benjamin Franklin. In September 1783, the delegates signed the **Treaty of Paris**, which confirmed U.S. independence and set the boundaries of the new nation. The United States now stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River and from Canada to the Florida border. **D**

Vocabulary

peninsula: a piece of land that projects into a body of water

MAIN IDEA

Evaluating

D What was the most important challenge that faced the new United States?



The War Becomes a Symbol of Liberty

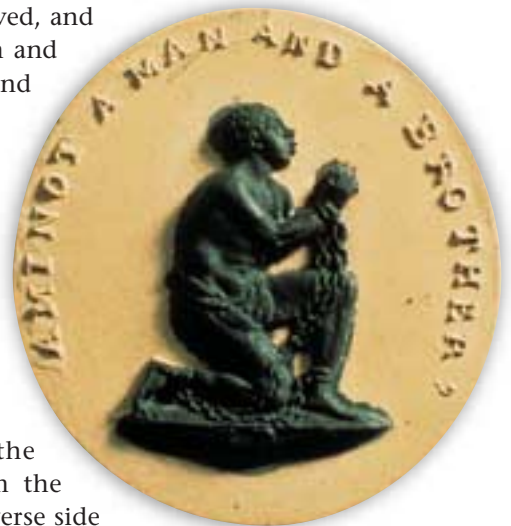
Revolutionary ideals set a new course for American society. During the war, social distinctions had begun to blur as the wealthy wore homespun clothing and as military leaders showed respect for all of their soldiers. Changes like these stimulated the rise of **egalitarianism** (ĭ-găl'ĭ-târ'ē-ə-nĭz'əm)—a belief in the equality of all people. This belief fostered a new attitude: the idea that ability, effort, and virtue, not wealth or family background, defined one's worth.

The egalitarianism of the 1780s, however, applied only to white males. It did not bring any new political rights to women. A few states made it possible for women to divorce, but common law still dictated that a married woman's property belonged to her husband.

Moreover, most African Americans were still enslaved, and even those who were free usually faced discrimination and poverty. However by 1804, many New England and Middle states had taken steps to outlaw slavery.

For Native Americans, the Revolution brought uncertainty. During both the French and Indian War and the Revolution, many Native American communities had been either destroyed or displaced, and the Native American population living east of the Mississippi had declined by about 50 percent. Postwar developments further threatened Native American interests, as settlers began taking tribal lands left unprotected by the Treaty of Paris. **E**

In the closing days of the Revolution, the Continental Congress had chosen a quotation from the works of the Roman poet Virgil as a motto for the reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States. The motto, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, means "a new order of the ages." Establishing a government and resolving internal problems in that new order would be a tremendous challenge for citizens of the newborn United States.



▲ English potter Josiah Wedgwood designed this anti-slavery cameo and sent copies of it to Benjamin Franklin.

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Effects

E How had the American Revolution affected the lives of Native Americans?



ASSESSMENT

1. TERMS & NAMES For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Loyalists
- Patriots
- Saratoga

- Valley Forge
- inflation
- Marquis de Lafayette

- Charles Cornwallis
- Yorktown

- Treaty of Paris
- egalitarianism

MAIN IDEA

2. TAKING NOTES

On a chart like the one below, list five significant events of the Revolutionary War in the column on the left. Note the significance of each event towards the American cause in the column on the right.

Event	Significance

CRITICAL THINKING

3. EVALUATING

Do you think the colonists could have won their independence without aid from foreigners? Explain.

Think About:

- the military needs of the Americans and the strengths of the French
- the colonists' military efforts in the South
- the Americans' belief in their fight for independence

4. ANALYZING EFFECTS

What were the effects of the Revolutionary War on the American colonists? **Think About:**

- political effects
- economic effects
- social effects

TRACING

THEMES

Women and Political Power

In their families and in the workplace, in speeches and in print, countless American women have worked for justice for all citizens. Throughout the history of the United States, women have played whatever roles they felt were necessary to better this country. They also fought to expand their own political power, a power that throughout much of American history has been denied them.

1770s

PROTEST AGAINST BRITAIN ►

In the tense years leading up to the Revolution, American women found ways to participate in the protests against the British. Homemakers boycotted tea and British-made clothing. In the painting at right, Sarah Morris Mifflin, shown with her husband Thomas, spins her own thread rather than use British thread. Some business women, such as printer Mary Goddard, who issued the first printed copy of the Declaration of Independence to include the signers' names, took more active roles.

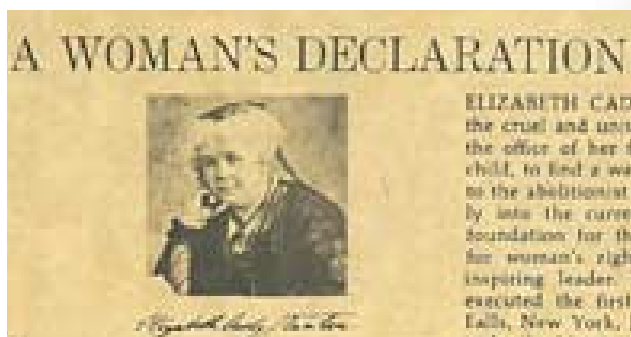


1848

SENECA FALLS ►

As America grew, women became acutely aware of their unequal status in society, particularly their lack of suffrage, or the right to vote.

In 1848, two women—Elizabeth Cady Stanton, shown above, and Lucretia Mott—launched the first woman suffrage movement in the United States at the Seneca Falls Convention in Seneca Falls, N.Y. During the convention, Stanton introduced her Declaration of Sentiments, in which she demanded greater rights for women, including the right to vote.



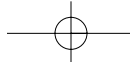
1920

THE RIGHT TO VOTE ►

More than a half-century after organizing for the right to vote, women finally won their struggle. In 1920, the United States adopted the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted women the right to vote.

Pictured to the right is one of the many suffrage demonstrations of the early 1900s that helped garner public support for the amendment.





1972–1982

THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT MOVEMENT ►

During the mid-1900s, as more women entered the workforce, many women recognized their continuing unequal status, including the lack of equal pay for equal work. By passing an Equal Rights Amendment, some women hoped to obtain the same social and economic rights as men.

Although millions supported the amendment, many men and women feared the measure would prompt unwanted change. The ERA ultimately failed to be ratified for the Constitution.

**ERA
YES**



2001

WOMEN IN CONGRESS ▲

In spite of the failure of the ERA, many women have achieved strong positions for themselves—politically as well as socially and economically.

In the 107th Congress, 60 women served in the House and 13 served in the Senate. Shown above are Washington's senators Patty Murray (left) and Maria Cantwell in 2000.



THINKING CRITICALLY

CONNECT TO HISTORY

1. Synthesizing How did women's political status change from 1770 to 2001?

SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R19.

CONNECT TO TODAY

2. Researching and Reporting Think of a woman who has played an important role in your community. What kinds of things did this woman do? What support did she receive in the community? What problems did she run into? Report your findings to the class.



RESEARCH LINKS

CLASSZONE.COM